suild·

MEMOIRS

OF THE

COUNT OF COMMINGE.

From the FRENCH

OF

MONSIEUR D'ARNAUD.

Qui pungit cor, profert sensum.
Ecclesiast. C. 22. V. 19.

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A

SKETCH

OF THE

ABBEY OF LA TRAPPE.

THE Abbey of la Trappe is ſituated in an extenſive vale on the borders of Perche and Normandy, which ſeems deſigned by nature the retreat of penitence; it being invironed with woods, lakes, and mountains, which render it almoſt inacceſſible.

In this ſolitude ſilence ever reigns: language can but faintly paint the melancholy ſcene; a ſcene teeming with the moſt noble traits for the gloomy imagination of a painter or a poet.

The venerable groves which caſt the cypreſs gloom, the winds whiſtling through the foliage which ſuperſtition conſtrues inauſpicious, the dying murmurs of the waters which gurgle over the pebbles, announce the confines of la Trappe.

It was founded by Rotrou, count du Perche, in the year 1140, to accompliſh a vow made in the perils of ſhipwreck; and it aſſumed the name of la *Trappe*, from the *ſtairs* which lead down to it.

Perpetual ſilence is the grand rule impoſed on the recluſe of this convent. It is the very eſſence of the inſtitution; and it was deemed a matter

of

of ſuch high import in the founder's eye, that he intimated to thoſe pious anchorites, that breaking ſilence would be to them a crime of not leſs heinous die than blaſphemy itſelf. The language of the convent therefore conſiſts rather in ſigns than words: and if neceſſity provokes one of the order at any time to violate this rigid prohibition, he muſt ſpeak in a whiſper with all poſſible conciſeneſs.—

Society has no ſweets for theſe holy men; they being debarred not only the pleaſures ariſing from rational converſation, but are abſolutely ſecluded from communicating their thoughts in writing.

Their

Their diet is of the coarſeſt viands, and diſtributed with a ſparing hand.

A plank covered with ſtraw, is all the luxury of their dormitory.

Few hours are allowed for refreſhment; they being ſummoned to matins at two in the morning, which continue till the day calls them to diſcharge the menial ſervices of the convent; in which the aged and the infirm are indiſcriminately employed.

Medicine is unknown within theſe walls; the ſick are ſtrangers to every indulgence; they riſe up early, and late take reſt. They muſt ſpend the day in prayer and in labour propor-

tionate to their ſtrength: they hear not the ſoothing voice of conſolation, they feel not the alleviating hand of friendſhip, but muſt drink the cup of bitterneſs in all its horrors. They perſevere in ſilence, abſtinence, and mortification, till the hour of death approaches; then they are ſupported to the chapel, receive the extreme unction, and are ſtretched on a plank ſtrewed with aſhes: in this comfortleſs ſituation they wait the moment of departure with tranquillity, with cheerfulneſs, with joy; and exhibit prodigies of heroiſm known only to theſe chriſtian philoſophers.——

IT was thought neceſſary, for the better underſtanding the following hiſtory, to give the above outlines of the inſtitution and ſituation of la Trappe; and for the gratification of thoſe minds which are diſſatisfied with fictitious ſcenes of miſery, to premiſe that the moſt ſtriking incidents in the ſubſequent Memoirs, have been unhappily realized.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

COUNT OF COMMINGE.

MY ſole motive for writing theſe memoirs is to recal the minuteſt circumſtances of my misfortunes, and engrave them, if poſſible, more deeply on my memory.

I am deſcended from the houſe of Comminge, one of the moſt illuſtrious families in the kingdom. My great-

grand-father, who had two children, made the youngeſt his heir in prejudice to his brother, and ordered him to aſſume the name and title of Marquis of Luſſan. The partiality of the parent abated not the affection of the children, who were equally deſirous, that their ſons ſhould be educated together, that the force of blood might be more cloſely united in the tender bands of friendſhip; but their wiſhes were ineffectual, and their utmoſt endeavours proved abortive; for the children imbibed an enmity in their cradles, which terminated only with their lives.

My

My father, who was greatly inferior in abilities to the young Marquis, conceived an antipathy to him, which time improved into the moſt inveterate hatred. They had perpetual quarrels, and as my father was ever the aggreſſor, he alone was puniſhed. At length he complained to the ſteward of our family, who told him he could furniſh him with the means to humble the pride of the Marquis: for, added he, the Marquis's eſtate is entailed on you, and your grand-father had no power to diſpoſe of it; after your father's deceaſe therefore it will not be difficult to recover your right.

This converſation eſtranged my father entirely from his couſin; and their mutual animoſities were carried to ſuch exceſs, that a ſeparation was the unavoidable conſequence. They ſaw not each other for many years, during which period they both were married; the Marquis of Luſſan had a daughter, an only child; my father had none but me.

As ſoon as the death of my grandfather had put him in poſſeſſion of his eſtate, my father practiſed the ſteward's advice. He ſearched after proofs to confirm his title, he rejected every propoſal of accommodation, and entered

tered a procefs againft the Marquis; which in the end could not fail ftripping him of his whole eftate. An unfortunate rencounter in hunting rendered them irreconcilable; my father, ever haughty and malicious, infulted the Marquis on the condition to which he fhould reduce him, in terms the moft opprobrious: the Marquis, tho' naturally of an eafy temper, could not forbear reply; this altercation brought on a duel, which terminated in favour of the Marquis, who difarmed my father and bid him beg his life. Even life, fays he, would be odious, if to you I owed it. To me you fhall owe it, replied the Marquis,

and toſſing him his ſword, he left him.

This generous act affected not my father; his prejudices on the contrary were encreaſed by the double victory his enemy had gained over him; and he proſecuted with implacable aſſiduity, the ſuit he had commenced againſt him.

Things were thus circumſtanced when I returned from my travels. I had been in the country but few days, when the Abbot of Rouillon (a relation of my mother's) acquainted us, that the titles of the eſtate, on which depended

depended the ſucceſs of the law-ſuit, were lodged in the archives of his abbey, where the title-deeds of our own family had been concealed during the confuſion of the civil wars. This information my father was moſt carefully to conceal, and to ſearch in perſon for the papers, or ſend one in whom he could repoſe the moſt implicit confidence. As my father was in an ill ſtate of health, he charged me with the commiſſion, having previouſly exaggerated the importance of it. The ſucceſs of your reſearches, ſays he, will tend more to your emolument than mine, ſince on recovering the eſtate, I will immediately veſt

it in you: but exclusive of your own interest, I flatter myself you so sensibly feel the wrongs of your father, that you will most cordially assist him in revenging the injuries he has received.

I had no reason to refuse my father's request, therefore assured him of my obedience; and having received all necessary instructions, it was thought expedient for me to assume the name and title of Marquis of Longville, the better to escape suspicion in the abbey, where the Marchioness of Lussan had many relations. An old domestic of my father's, and my own valet de chambre

chambre were my ſole attendants: I haſtened to the abbey, where I found the title deeds, which inconteſtably confirmed the entail, and acquainted my father with it, begging permiſſion at the ſame time to ſpend ſome days at the Wells which were in the neighbourhood. The ſucceſs of my reſearches bribed my father to conſent, and I ſet out to the Wells immediately, retaining my feigned name, as it would have been requiſite to have appeared with a grander retinue to ſupport the dignity of the Houſe of Comminge.

The

The day after my arrival I was introduced to the company, and as in thoſe places of public reſort the ſtiffneſs of ceremonial gives way to freedom of behaviour, I was immediately admitted into all the parties of pleaſure.

I dined with the Marquis of Valette, who gave an elegant entertainment to the ladies, moſt of whom I had ſeen before at the Wells, and had paid them ſome general compliments, agreeable to the gallantry of the age. To theſe ladies I was talking indiſcriminately, when a matron of moſt noble preſence entered the room, attended

tended by her daughter, who was bleſſed with the moſt perfect ſymmetry of features, and elegance of perſon; her unaſſuming modeſty heightened the glow of youth, and added grace to every charm. I loved inſtantaneouſly, and the firſt moment decided my fate. My gaiety vaniſhed, and my whole attention was ſolely fixed on her. She perceived my anxiety with a bluſh. A walk was propoſed, and I had the happineſs to give my hand to the moſt lovely of her ſex. We were at ſuch diſtance from the company, that I had a fair opportunity of diſcloſing the ſentiments of my heart; but I, who had

my eyes rivetted on her before without ceasing, could not now, when unobserved, dare raise them from the earth. In my gallantry with the fair, my heart had hitherto been a stranger to the dictates of my tongue; but now I could not conceal from myself the tender emotions with which I was moved.

We rejoined the company without having opened my lips; the ladies retired to their respective houses, and I to my lodgings, the better to enjoy my anxiety, which was blended with a gleam of joy, a joy that ever accompanies the commencement of love.

My

My paſſion had rendered me ſo timid that I dared not even enquire the name of my beloved, as if my curioſity would have betrayed the ſentiments of my ſoul. But what was my ſituation, when I heard the lady was daughter to the Marquis of Luſſan!

Every thing I had to apprehend from the enmity of our families flaſhed upon my memory. But of all the melancholy reflections, which preſented themſelves to view, the dread of Adelaid's being inſpired with averſion to every one of our family, was by far the moſt intolerable. I could not but applaud myſelf for having

assumed a feigned name, and flattered myself, that under this disguise I should make her conscious of my love without prepossessing her against me; and that when at length I should discover the deceit, I should excite at least her pity.

I was determined more studiously to conceal my name, and to exert every talent which might render me agreeable. I haunted Adelaid as her shadow; my sole wish was to have an opportunity of speaking to her alone, which when it offered, I dared not take: the fear of losing a thousand little liberties, and much more

the

the apprehenſion of her diſpleaſure, frightened me into ſilence.

In this ſtate of inquietude I had lived for ſome time; at length a fine evening enticed the company to walk, when Adelaid accidentally dropped her bracelet, in which was ſet her picture. The Chevalier de St. Odon very officiouſly picked it up; and having attentively ſurveyed it, with great compoſure depoſited it in his pocket. She begged him to return it with much good humour, but on his refuſal ſpoke with ſome warmth.

The

The Chevalier was a man of addreſs, but his ſucceſs with the fair had made him vain and coxcomical. Adelaid's peremptory demand nothing diſconcerted him; he aſked her with a ſmile, whether ſhe would deprive him of that for which he was indebted to chance alone.

I flatter myſelf, added he, in a lower tone of voice, that when you are acquainted with my ſentiments, you will have no objection to my keeping what fortune has thus graciouſly thrown in my way, and without waiting for an anſwer, inſtantly withdrew.

 I was

I was at ſome ſmall diſtance, during this fracas, with the Marchioneſs of Valette; but when I perceived that the voice of Adelaid was more than uſually animated, I drew near, but failed not in thoſe attentions which reſpect requires. She related the circumſtance to her mother with ſome emotion. The Marchioneſs was not leſs angry than her daughter. I ſpoke not a word, but continued my walk with the ladies, and having waited on them home, I then immediately went in ſearch of the Chevalier. I found him at home, told him the purport of my viſit, and that I ſhould wait for him at a place appointed. He

accepted my invitation, and met me accordingly. I am perſuaded, ſaid I, immediately accoſting him, that the affair which happened on the walks was a mere pleaſantry, but I am ſure you are too gallant a man to keep a lady's picture without her permiſſion. I know not, replies he, what intereſt you may have in the affair, but this I know, that I never permit advice to be thus impertinently intruded on me. I truſt, ſaid I, laying my hand upon my ſword, that this will enforce my advice, and oblige you to follow it.

The Chevalier was brave, and drew immediately; we fought for ſome

time

time with equal addreſs; but he was not animated with love like mine; my paſſion threw me off my guard, and laid me open to two ſlight wounds; in return I made a dangerous but ſucceſsful thruſt, which obliged him to beg his life and return the picture. Having raiſed him up and conducted him to a houſe adjacent, I retired to my lodgings and dreſſed my wounds. Then I examined the dear picture, and imprinted on it a thouſand kiſſes. In painting I was an adept, and had now an opportunity of exerting my ſkill. What cannot love perform! I copied the picture the ſame night, and ſo happily ſucceeded, that I myſelf

could ſcarce diſtinguiſh the copy from the original. This gave me the idea of ſubſtituting the one for the other. In keeping the original I found a lover's advantage, that then even without her knowledge, ſhe would oblige me by honouring my work with her notice; theſe things are no trifles in the eye of a lover, as my heart full well can teſtify.—After having diſpoſed the bracelet in its former ſhape that my theft might eſcape detection, I carried it to Adelaid. The Marchioneſs of Luſſan ſaid a thouſand obliging things on the occaſion; Adelaid indeed ſpake but little; ſhe appeared embarraſſed; but a gleam of joy in being obliged

to me, ſeemed to ſhine through her confuſion, which gave me the moſt heart-felt ſatisfaction.

I have in my life experienced ſome few of thoſe delicious moments, and if my misfortunes had not been uncommonly great, I ſhould not have thought them too dearly purchaſed.

This litttle adventure was productive of the moſt favourable conſequences; it gained me ſuch intimacy in the family, that I had frequent opportunities of ſeeing Adelaid; and although I never had diſcloſed my ſentiments, was well aſſured, they had

not eſcaped her notice: and I had ſome reaſon to imagine that I was not wholly diſagreeable to her. Hearts ſuſceptible as ours are not long ſtrangers to each other, but moſt ſenſibly expreſs the delicate feelings of the ſoul.

Two months had glided on in this amuſive manner, when a letter from my father ordered me to return. This was like a thunder-bolt too forcible to be withſtood. I had been ſo wholly wrapped up in the pleaſing thoughts of ſeeing and loving Adelaid, that the idea of our being ſeparated was perfectly new; My grief on the occa-

ſion,

ſion, my reflections on the continuation of the law-ſuit unhappily ſubſiſting between our families, with every thing that was odious, preſented themſelves to my view; I paſſed the night in miſery inexpreſſible, and after projecting a thouſand ſchemes which died away in embryo, it on a ſudden ſtruck me to deſtroy the papers relative to the eſtate, which confirmed our title to the domains of the houſe of Luſſan. I was aſtoniſhed that the ſcheme had not before engaged my attention, ſince it muſt infallibly prevent the conſequences of that law-ſuit, which ſo much I feared. I even reproached myſelf for having kept ſo

long, what my tenderneſs ought much ſooner to have deſtroyed. The injury I was doing my father ſeemed of little conſequence; as I could transfer to him an eſtate, which a relation had bequeathed me, far ſuperior to that I was going to deprive him of.

Little is requiſite to convince a man in love, I thought I had a right to diſpoſe of thoſe papers; I ſearched the caſket which contained them, and never knew a happier moment, than that which gave them to the flames. The idea of obliging my beloved raviſhed my very ſoul. If ſhe loves me, ſaid I, ſhe ſhall know the ſacrifice

I have

I have made; but if I cannot touch her heart, let her ever remain in ignorance. How ſhall I endure her regret at being obliged to me? That Adelaid may love me, from my heart I pray, but I wiſh not to burden her with obligations. Not her gratitude, but her affection is the ſole object of my deſires.

I cannot but confeſs, that the conſciouſneſs of what I had done, imboldened me to ſpeak with greater freedom; and as the moment of my departure was at hand, I ſeized the firſt favourable opportunity.

Beautiful

Beautiful Adelaid, ſaid I, the moment approaches, which muſt ſeparate me from you; will you deign ſometimes to think of the man, whoſe future happineſs depends alone on you? My grief was too big for utterance, I could ſpeak no more. She anſwered me not; but ſeemed confuſed and melancholy. Have you, ſaid I, heard me with a favourable ear? Anſwer me, for heaven's ſake anſwer me, though but a word! what would you that I ſhould ſay? I ought not to underſtand you, I ought not to reply.——

She had ſcarce pronounced theſe words, when ſhe abruptly left me; and though I watched every opportunity,

tunity, I could not ſpeak to her the remainder of the day. She ſtudiouſly avoided me; her air was much confuſed, and I was apprehenſive, that by my aſſurance, I had forfeited her eſteem. I attended on her with reverential ſilence, and ſhould have continued this behaviour ſo conformable to my reſpect, and agreeable to the delicacy of my ſentiments, had not the neceſſity I was under to leave her, urged me to break ſilence. I wiſhed before my departure to acquaint her with my real name; a confeſſion which gave me more concern than even the declaration of my love. O my Adelaid, why do you ſo carefully avoid

me!

me! what then will you do, when you know all my crimes, or rather my misfortunes? Under a fictitious name I have much abuſed your confidence; I am not whom you think.— I am—the Count of Comminge.—— What, interrupted Adelaid, are you our mortal foe? It is you, it is your father who purſue with unremitting hate our family to ruin.——Brand me not with a name ſo odious; I am your lover ready to ſacrifice my fortune and my life in your ſervice. My father ſhall not do you evil; my love aſſures you of it.

Why

Why have you thus deceived me, ſays ſhe, why dealt thus ungenerouſly with me? Had you not deceived me, I ſhould not have been thus unhappy; had you diſcovered your real name, it would have taught me to avoid you.

Repent not, replied I, of that goodneſs, you have deigned to ſhew me.

Leave me, ſays ſhe, leave me, the more I ſee, the more I hear, renders to a greater degree inevitable the miſeries I cannot but apprehend.

The tenderneſs of theſe words, which gave me reaſon to hope, filled my

my ſoul with joy ineffable. I flattered myſelf that my father would conſent to my requeſt; I was ſo full of the idea, that I thought every one muſt think and feel as I did. I even mentioned my hopes to Adelaid as certain of ſucceſs. I know not, ſays ſhe, why my heart refuſes theſe amuſing hopes; miſery ſtares me in the face; yet I am happy in feeling, what I feel for you. I have without reſerve diſcloſed my ſentiments; ſentiments I am willing you ſhould know; but at the ſame time remember, that I ſhall know when requiſite to ſacrifice them to my duty.

I had previous to my departure frequent converſations with Adelaid, and had every day new reaſons to congratulate myſelf on my good fortune. The pleaſure of loving, and the conſciouſneſs of being loved, filled all my ſoul with joy. Jealouſy diſturbed not the harmony of our diſcourſe; diſtruſt interrupted not our future ſchemes of happineſs. We were convinced of each other's affections, and this certainty ſo far from diminiſhing our vivacity, heightened the pleaſure of mutual confidence. Adelaid's only inquietude aroſe from her apprehenſions of my father. I ſhall die with grief, ſays ſhe, if I ſhould bring you into

diſgrace

diſgrace with your family; I hope you love me, but I hope you will be happy. At length the dreadful moment came; I left her full of the moſt tender and lively paſſion; and I buoyed up myſelf with the hopes of rendering my father favourable to my love.

Alas! he already was informed of every circumſtance which had paſſed. The ſervant he had ſent with me, was ordered to be a ſpy on my conduct; he therefore had acquainted my father with my love and with my duel: and had painted the Marchioneſs of Luſſan and her daughter as artful deſigning

wo-

women, who knew me to be the Count of Comminge, and had enticed me into their ſnares. My father, naturally paſſionate, was worked up by this information to a paroxyſm of fury; he treated me on my return with the moſt ſavage inhumanity, and reproached me with my attachment to Adelaid as with a crime of the blackeſt enormity.

Baſe wretch, ſays he, dare you love my enemies; without any regard to what you owe either yourſelf, or me, you have entered into engagements with a family which my heart abhors. I know not to what lengths your meanneſs may have carried you.

Yes, my father, ſaid I, I am blameable, but I am unavoidably ſo. I cannot withſtand my fate; and while I on my knees implore your pardon, I feel that no power on earth can detach me from my love. Have pity on me, I dare repeat, have pity on me! Finiſh this variance, which has imbittered the ſunſhine of your days, and ſuffer yourſelf to be reconciled to the houſe of Luſſan. Our mutual love the moment we ſaw each other ſeems to be the interpoſition of heaven to effect a reconciliation. You are the father of none but me! wiſh you to load me with miſery, aggravated with the reflection of having received the

cup

cup of bitterneſs from the hand of him who gave me life? Have compaſſion on a ſon who has involuntarily offended!

My father regarded me while I ſpake with an eye of indignation; I have heard you, ſays he, with a compoſure which aſtoniſhes me, and which I thought myſelf incapable of; the only favour you can expect from me is this alternative; either renounce your folly, or the title of my ſon; be ſpeedy in your reſolves, and inſtantly deliver up thoſe papers entruſted to your care, a confidence you little merited.

Had my father relented, his demand would have perplexed me much; but his cruelty gave me courage. The papers, replied I, are no longer in my cuſtody, they are committed to the flames; let my eſtate indemnify your loſs. Scarce had I ſpoken, when my father, with all the fury of a maniac, drew his ſword, and as I made not the leaſt effort of reſiſtance, he would have inevitably killed me, had not my mother that inſtant entered the apartment, and threw herſelf between us in the moment the father was going to imbrue his hands in the blood of an only child. Know you not your own ſon, cried ſhe? then turning to me,

me, ordered me to attend her in her dreſſing room.—I waited a conſiderable time before my mother appeared; at length ſhe came, not armed with rage, nor diſguiſed by paſſion; ſhe looked, ſhe ſpake the tender parent, who entered into all my pains. She begged me with tears to pity the condition I had reduced her to.

Alas my ſon can a miſtreſs whom you have ſo lately known blot all duty from your memory?—May not a parent's tears prevail? If on me your happineſs depended, my life ſhould be a willing ſacrifice. But you my ſon have a father who will be obeyed; he

is now ready to enter into the moſt violent meaſures. If you wiſh not to load me with miſery inſupportable, conquer a paſſion productive of nothing but unhappineſs.—

I knew not what to reply; I loved my mother with all the tenderneſs of filial affection, but my paſſion for Adelaid was too violent to be removed. I ſhould prefer death, ſaid I, to the diſobliging of you; and die I ſhall, if you have not pity on me. To what would you adviſe me? I can give up life with greater eaſe than Adelaid. Dare I break the vows, the proteſtations I have made? after receiving proofs of her

her affection, ſhall I forſake her? No my mother, you cannot wiſh your ſon to be a villain.——

I then related the whole progreſs of my love; I am certain, ſaid I, you would approve of my choice, for ſhe has your ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, ſhe has your openneſs of heart; can you then wiſh me to ceaſe loving ſuch amiableneſs? But, ſays my mother, what do you purpoſe to do? Your father inſiſts on your immediately marrying, and you are to be ſent into the country till the day arrives. It is therefore abſolutely neceſſary that you appear determined to obey him. You are to

be ſent into the country to-morrow, attended by a perſon in whom he can confide.

Abſence may work greater miracles than you imagine; time may efface the traces of Adelaid's perfections, and you may be again yourſelf. But at all adventures irritate not your father by diſobedience; delay the time, if poſſible; I on my part will leave nothing undone that may give you ſatisfaction. Your father's diſpoſition has ever been too violent, but now his vengeance is lawful, to what extremes will it not provoke him? You are highly culpable in deſtroying

thoſe papers; and he is perſuaded that Adelaid inveigled you to make her that ſacrifice by the order of her mother.

Alas ſaid I, is it poſſible he can think ſo uncharitably of the Marchioneſs of Luſſan! So far from it, that Adelaid knows not what I have done; and I am confident ſhe would have employed all her power over me to have prevented it.

I then concerted a plan of correſpondence, and begéd ſhe would viſit Adelaid on her arrival at Bourdeaux. She aſſured me ſhe would, on condition

tion that I would implicitly ſubmit to my father, if Adelaid's affection ſhould fall ſhort of my expectations. The greateſt part of the night paſſed away in converſing with my mother, when the morning dawned, my conductor informed me I muſt mount my horſe.

The place of my exile was ſituated in the mountains, ſome leagues diſtant from the Wells; I went therefore part of the ſame road which I had ſo lately travelled. As we arrived early the ſecond day of our journey at a village where we were to ſpend the night, I took a walk on the high-road by way of amuſement till ſupper; I

had

had gone but a ſmall diſtance, before I obſerved a carriage, which through the awkwardneſs of the driver was overturned ſome paces from me. Not only humanity, but the unuſual fluttering of my heart told me the part I was to act on the occaſion. I fled to the chariot; two ſervants who had quitted their horſes aſſiſted me in relieving the ſufferers, whom I found on enquiry to be Adelaid and her mother. It was them indeed! Adelaid had greatly bruiſed her foot, but the pleaſure of ſeeing me made her forget her pains. She was too lame to walk; I gently raiſed her up; I claſped her in my arms; hers folded

round

round my neck, her hand gently preſſed upon my lips. Not all my miſeries, nor ſo many years of ſorrow can efface from my memory that rapturous moment which gave my Adelaid to my arms. I was in an extacy of joy that near deprived me of ſenſation: Adelaid could not but perceive it; her modeſty took the alarm, and ſhe endeavoured to diſengage herſelf from my embrace. Alas! little did ſhe know the exceſs of my love; I was too full of my raptures, to think of aught beſide.

Let me endeavour to walk, ſays ſhe, in a low and timid voice; have you

you then, replied I, the cruelty to envy me the only happineſs perhaps I ſhall ever taſte? My words were accompanied with a look of inexpreſſible tenderneſs. She continued ſilent; and one falſe ſtep intentionally made, fixed her in her former ſituation.

The inn was ſo near, that in a few moments I was deprived of my precious charge. I carried her to an apartment, while the ſervants took care of her mother, who was much more dangerouſly hurt: as they were buſy in attending on the Marchioneſs, it gave me an opportunity of relating

part

part of the converſation between my father and me.

I ſuppreſſed the article of having burnt the title deeds, which ſhe had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of; her knowledge of which would have concerned me much. I dared not paint my father in his proper colours; for Adelaid was ſo ſtrictly virtuous, that ſhe would have lent a deaf ear to my vows, had ſhe not flattered herſelf, that our families would at length conſent to our union.

I confirmed her hopes by aſſuring her of my mother's tenderneſs for me,

and

and favourable opinion of her. Adelaid then desired that I would speak to the Marchioness: "She knows "your sentiments for me, and is no "stranger to the situation of my heart. "I thought her authority necessary to "assist me in conquering my incli-"nations, if requisite; or to let me "give way to them without control. "I am confident she will leave no ex-"pedient untried that may effect an "accommodation."

The joy which these hopes gave Adelaid, made my heart more livelily susceptible of its misery. "Tell me "replied I, (pressing her hand with "all

" all the warmth of virtuous love) if
" our fathers ſhould prove inexorable,
" will you then have pity on me?
" My utmoſt endeavours, ſays ſhe,
" ſhall be exerted to make my incli-
" nations conformable to my duty;
" but I feel, that I ſhall be moſt
" miſerable, if duty ſhould oblige
" me to renounce you."

The Marchioneſs of Luſſan's attendants coming in, interrupted our converſation. I immediately paid my reſpects to the old lady, who received me with great cordiality, and promiſed to leave nothing undone, which

could

could contribute to the reconcilement of our families.

On this aſſurance I withdrew, and ſearched after my conductor who waited for me in my chamber. As he had not had the curioſity to enquire the ſtrangers names, I had an opportunity of ſeeing Adelaid once again before my departure. I the next morning entered her chamber in a ſituation which beggars all deſcription; the idea of taking leave perhaps for ever chilled my blood with horror. I approached her mother, my voice faultered, I could not ſpeak! but grief was a powerful advocate, and ſo ſuc-

ceſsfully pleaded my cauſe, that I was honoured with more particular marks of eſteem than the preceding evening. Adelaid was retired to the other end of the room; it was with difficulty I could ſupport myſelf; I at length drew near and attempted to ſpeak, but could only ſay, my deareſt Adelaid, muſt I leave you? my tears ſpoke the reſt —I have, ſays ſhe, (the ſympathizing tear ſtealing down her cheek) already ſhewed you the ſenſibility of my heart; I repent not of it. The purity of my thoughts authorizes my freedom, and you merit my utmoſt good opinion. What will be our fate I know not. My parents muſt decide mine.—

mine.——Why, replied I, ſhould we ſubmit to the tyranny of our parents? Let us treat them as they deſerve? Let us fly to the extremeſt corner of the earth, and enjoy in retirement the ſweets of mutual love.

How dare you, anſwered Adelaid, affront me with ſuch a propoſal? Would you have me repent of my choice, would you that I ſhould recal my favourable opinion of you? I have already confeſſed that my tenderneſs may render me miſerable, but depend on it it ſhall never make me criminal. Adieu, added ſhe, (offering me her hand) and remember that by

our conſtancy and our virtue we muſt engage the ſmiles of fortune; but however we may be diſpoſed of, let us reſolve to do nothing which may make us bluſh for each other.

I kiſſed her hand as ſhe ſpake; I bathed it with my tears: I attempted to ſpeak, but my tongue refuſed its office. My heart was ſo full, that I quitted her apartment without making any reply.

I inſtantly mounted my horſe, and rode the whole day without ſuſtenance, and without ceaſing to weep. At length my tears abated, and I began

to

to taſte the tranquillity which reſults from a conſciouſneſs of being tenderly beloved.——

The remainder of our journey paſſed as the beginning, in an uninterrupted ſilence.——We arrived on the third day at a caſtle built at the bottom of the Pyrenees, which was deſtined for my retreat.—Groves of cypreſs and barren rocks were all my view, and I heard nothing but the croaking of the ravens and the thunder of the cataracts which fell from the mountains.——

This ſituation, all ſavage as it was, gave me much ſatisfaction. For the gloomineſs of the proſpect fed the melancholy of my mind. I ſpent whole days in the woods, writing the effuſions of my love; this was my only pleaſure, this was my ſole employ.

I heard ſometimes from my mother, and in one letter ſhe gave me a gleam of hope, by telling me that all our relations were labouring at an accommodation, and that ſhe had reaſon to think their endeavours would not be ineffectual. For the enſuing ſix weeks I had no letter from my mother; good

God!

God! how tedious were thoſe days to me. I walked conſtantly upon the road the meſſenger muſt come, and returned as conſtantly diſappointed. At length I ſaw at ſome diſtance a man whoſe buſineſs I doubted not was with me. My former impatience vaniſhed, and gave way to fear. I dared not advance to meet him, my feet were riveted to the ground. The doubts the anxiety which appeared before ſo inſupportable, ſeemed at that inſtant to be a bleſſing I was ſoon to be deprived of.

I was not deceived.—The letters brought me by this meſſenger, inform-

ed me that my father would not listen to any terms; and to add to the fulness of my misery, I moreover learned that he finally had fixed my marriage with a daughter of the Count of Foix; that the nuptials were to be celebrated at the place of my confinement, and that he would be with me in a few days to prepare for the solemnity. I did not hesitate one moment on the part I was to act; I expected my father's arrival with composure; and it was some mitigation to my pains to be enabled to make Adelaid this sacrifice. I was well assured of her fidelity; I loved too much to doubt it. Love like mine was a stranger to suspicion.—

My mother likewiſe who had ſuch cogent reaſons to detach me from Adelaid, had never even hinted in her letters the leaſt ſuſpicion of her inconſtancy.—

Adelaid's fidelity contributed to the livelineſs of my paſſion, and I was more enabled to meet my father's ſeverity, as it gave me an opportunity of ſhewing my affection. The three days previous to my father's arrival, I paſſed in ſettling my plan of behaviour, which would give Adelaid freſh inſtances of my conſtancy. This idea in ſpite of my deplorable ſituation,

filled

filled my heart with a ſenſation bordering on joy.——

The interview between my father and me was on my part very cool, but reſpectful; on his, ſtern and haughty.

I have given you time, ſays he, to repent of your follies, and now am come to give you an opportunity to atone for them. Let your obedience be your reply to this mark of my goodneſs, and prepare to receive as your wife the lady I have deſtined for you. The marriage ſhall be here; your mother will arrive to-morrow

with

with the Count of Foix and his daughter. I am extremely ſorry, Sir, (ſaid I) that it is not in my power to oblige you. I have too much honour to give my hand, where my heart will ever be a ſtranger. I beg your permiſſion therefore to leave this place; ſince Mademoiſelle de Foix, all amiable as ſhe may be, will not be able to ſhake my reſolution: and the ill compliment I muſt pay her, will be felt more ſenſibly in refuſing her hand, after I ſhall be acquainted with her perſon; let me intreat you therefore to detain me no longer in this place.

No,

No, replies my father, with fury flaſhing from his eye, you ſhall not go, neither ſhall you more behold the ſun; for I will inſtantly confine you in a dungeon, deſtined for the reception of ſuch as you.—I ſwear no power on earth ſhall ever ſet you at liberty, unleſs you return to your duty. I will puniſh you by every method my vengeance can ſuggeſt; I will diſinherit you, I will ſtrip you of your fortune, and give it to Mademoiſelle de Foix, that I may keep my word with her as much as in my power. His threat was inſtantly executed, and I was conducted to

the

the bottom of a tower, which admitted only a glimmering light through a ſmall iron grate in the wall. He ordered me to be moſt narrowly watched, to be fed but twice in the day, and to be ſecluded from all intercourſe with my friends or relations.

In this ſtate did I paſs ſome days not wholly devoid of ſatisfaction. The ſacrifice I had made Adelaid ſo entirely engroſſed my attention, that I paid no regard to the inconveniences of a priſon. But when this reflection became leſs lively on my imagination, I gave way to all the agonies of grief; I tortured myſelf with apprehenſions

that

that Adelaid might be forced into new engagements. I painted her as ſurrounded with my rivals aſſiduous in their devoirs, while I was immured in a dungeon, the companion of affliction. Recollection checked ſuch rebel thoughts, and my heart ſmote me for harbouring ſuſpicions of that ungenerous nature.

My mother contrived to convey a letter to me, in which ſhe exhorted me to obey my father, whoſe reſentment grew every day more violent. She added, that ſhe had ſuffered greatly on my account, and that her aſſiduity in attempting a reconciliation

had

had made my father ſuſpect her correſpondence.

My mother's uneaſineſs gave me freſh concern, but I thought my own ſufferings would in ſome meaſure excuſe my behaviour. As I was thus meditating on the ſeverity of my fate, I was interrupted in my revery, by a noiſe at the window, and immediately a letter dropped into the room. I broke it open with anxiety bordering on diſtraction, I was motionleſs with apprehenſion; but what became of me after I had read it? Theſe were the contents.——

"I am

"I am indebted to the Count of "Comminge for the knowledge of "my obligations to you, which his "anger provoked him to diſcover, "and which your generoſity would "never have revealed. I am like-"wiſe but too well acquainted with "the horrors of your ſituation, from "which you cannot be relieved, but "by means which probably may "heighten your miſery. Your ge-"neroſity requires the moſt grateful "return; gratitude enables me to ex-"ecute, what your ſufferings moſt "juſtly demand. Your father inſiſts, "that the price of your liberty ſhall "be my immediate marriage, as that

"will

" will effectually prevent the union
" so odious to his thoughts. The sa-
" crifice may perhaps cost me my
" life, most certainly my peace of
" mind for ever. Not misery in all
" its variety of horrors shall aught
" avail, I am determined! Your suf-
" ferings, your imprisonment, are
" ever before my eyes. In a few
" days I shall be the wife of the Mar-
" quis of Benavides. That which I
" know of his character, tells me
" what I am to undergo. But at
" least I owe you this mark of my
" fidelity, that I can from my en-
" gagement foresee nothing but mi-
" sery. You, on the contrary, en-

" deavour to be happy. Your eaſe
" and tranquillity will be my only
" conſolation. I ought not to have
" ſaid ſo much. Was I truely ge-
" nerous, my motive for marrying
" ſhould be to you unknown, that
" you might call ingratitude, what
" ariſes from exceſs of love. I had
" formed ſuch a deſign, but wanted
" courage to put it in execution. In
" my deplorable ſituation, I need the
" conſolation of thinking, that my
" memory will not be odious to you.
" Alas! how ſoon muſt I baniſh all
" thoughts of you. I muſt forget
" you; I muſt at leaſt attempt it.
" But my miſery, however keen, will

" be

"be more ſenſibly aggravated, if you "do not moſt ſtudiouſly avoid all "occaſion of ſeeing or ſpeaking to "me. Remember, that you owe me "this mark of your eſteem; and "think how dear that eſteem muſt "be to me, ſince that is the only "ſentiment virtue will permit me to "demand."——

Of this fatal epiſtle, I read only to theſe words, "Your father inſiſts, "that the price of your liberty ſhall "be my immediate marriage." That dreadful ſentence penetrated me with ſuch a lively grief, that I could read no more. I threw myſelf on a mat-

treſs, which was the whole furniture of my bed, where I laid for ſome hours without ſenſation, and probably had cloſed my eyes for ever, had it not been for the aſſiſtance of the ſervant who brought my food. He was greatly alarmed at the ſtate he found me in, but much more ſo at the exceſs of my ſorrow, when I recovered my ſenſes. The letter, which during my ſwoon, I had held faſt in my hand, was bathed with my tears, and I ſpoke ſo incoherently, that he was under apprehenſions for my reaſon.—

This man, who before was dead to every ſentiment of compaſſion, could

not

not now resist the feelings of humanity. He condemned the proceedings of my father, he reproached himself for executing his orders, and with much sincerity implored my pardon. His penitence prompted me to ask his connivance at my absence for eight days only; at the expiration of which term, I gave him my honour, I would return and deliver myself into his hands. My gaoler grown compassionate by my sufferings, stimulated by his interest, and probably apprehensive of my future vengeance, was bribed to consent, on condition he might attend me.

My design, as soon as formed, I wished to execute, but no horses were in readiness, I therefore reluctantly waited for the ensuing morning. My intention was to see Adelaid, to display all the horrors of my despair, and on her persisting in her resolution, to die at her feet.—It was necessary for the execution of my purpose to arrive before her marriage; every moment therefore of delay appeared an age. I red over the letter again and again; hoping to find something, which might before have escaped my notice. I examined the date; and flattered myself, that this fatal marriage might be delayed.

"She

" She has made this effort, ſaid I, to
" ſhew her generoſity; but undoubt-
" edly ſhe will ſeize every pretext to
" defer it. But how can I flatter my-
" ſelf with ſuch idle chimeras? Ade-
" laid ſacrifiſes herſelf to my liberty,
" ſhe therefore will expedite the
" day.—Alas! how could ſhe ſup-
" poſe that liberty alone had any
" charms for me? No—I ſhall every
" where find that priſon from which ſhe
" wiſhes to deliver me.——She never
" knew my love.——She views me
" through the falſe medium of other
" men.—Yes——there is the rock on
" which I ſplit——I am yet more
" miſerable than my gloomy imagi-

" nation painted me; for now I have
" loſt the conſolation of thinking,
" that ſhe was conſcious of the exceſs
" of my paſſion." The whole night was paſſed in plaints like theſe. As ſoon as the morning dawned, I mounted my ſteed, and rode the whole day a ſtranger to refreſhment. I was towards the evening unexpectedly met by my mother, who having teſtified her ſurpriſe at the unexpected meeting, inſiſted on my getting into her carriage. I dared not enquire the occaſion of her journey; I feared the worſt; my fears were too well founded.——

I come

I come, ſays ſhe, my ſon, with your father's conſent, to deliver you from your impriſonment. Alas, ſaid I, Adelaid is married! My mother anſwered only by her ſilence.——My misfortunes which were now irremediable burſt upon me in all their horrors. I fell into a ſtate of inſenſibility, and ſuch was the power of grief, that my mind was alike indifferent to every ſenſation. Neither was my body a ſtranger to pain. I was ſeized with a ſhivering fit while we were in the chariot: my mother, as ſoon as we alighted, ordered me to bed. The two following days I laid without ſpeaking, without nouriſhment.——My fever increaſed,

creaſed, and the third day I was thought beyond the power of phyſic. My mother never left my chamber; her tears, her intreaties, and the name of Adelaid, by which ſhe often invoked me, at length prevailed on me to live. After five days the fury of the fever abated. My firſt enquiry was for Adelaid's letter, which my mother had taken away during my phrenzy. She perceived I was ſo affected with the loſs of it, that ſhe was obliged to return it. I put it into a purſe which contained Adelaid's picture, and ſeized every opportunity to retire and read it.——

My

My mother, who was by nature compaſſionate, ſympathized with me, and endeavoured to ſooth my cares; ſhe knew the neceſſity of humouring my grief, and that the cure muſt be left to time. She ſuffered me to talk of Adelaid, and often herſelf would begin the converſation. And as ſhe found that the only thing which adminiſtered conſolation, was the idea of my beloved, ſhe minutely related to me her perſuading Adelaid to marry.——

" I implore your pardon, my ſon, " for the misfortune I have unhappily " brought on you; and which I

" could not apprehend would have ſo
" ſenſibly affected you. Your impri-
" ſonment made me fear not only for
" your health, but your life. I was
" no ſtranger to the inflexibility of
" your father, who would never have
" ſet you at liberty, while there was
" a poſſibility of your marrying Ade-
" laid. I was determined to ſpeak to
" that generous girl. I wiſhed her to
" partake of my fears; ſhe looked
" not on them as the trifling appre-
" henſions of maternal fondneſs, but
" ſeemed more ſenſibly affected than
" myſelf. She deemed my reaſons
" ſo powerful, that ſhe reſolved im-
" mediately to marry. To which her

" duty

"duty contributed not a little; for "her father resenting the usage of "the Count of Comminge, pressed "her to give her hand to the worthiest "of your rivals. I asked her whom "she intended to honour by her "choice. It is to me, said she, to-"tally indifferent, since I cannot give "my hand to him who has long pos-"sessed my heart."——

Two days after this conversation, I heard that the Marquis of Benavides was preferred to all his rivals. This was to all a matter of astonishment; for Benavides person is odious to a degree, which his meanness of spirit

and

and capricious humour have rendered ſtill more deſpicable. I dread the conſequences!—I ſaw and ſpake to her a few days previous to her nuptials. "I am, ſaid ſhe, preparing myſelf "for miſery; but marry I muſt and "will. And ſince I am confident "that there is no other ſtep to deliver "your ſon, I reproach myſelf for "every moment's delay. Yet this "marriage, which is ſolely for his "welfare, will probably be the moſt "intolerable of my miſeries. I ſhall "at leaſt convince him by my choice, "that his intereſt alone determined "me. Pity me, my dear madam, for "I deſerve your compaſſion; by my

"behaviour

" behaviour to the Marquis of Be-
" navides I will merit your eſteem."
My mother added, that the Count of Comminge had acquainted Adelaid with my burning the title deeds, and publickly reproached her for it. She ſolemnly declared to me, ſays my mother, that nothing ſo ſenſibly touched her as your generoſity in concealing the favour you had conferred on her family.

Our time paſſed away in ſuch like converſe, and although my melancholy was exceſſive, it yet had that inexpreſſible ſweetneſs, which attends the conſciouſneſs of being beloved. Some

months

months had elapſed, when my mother received a letter from my father, ordering her immediate return. He had ſcarce deigned to take any notice of my illneſs; for ſuch had been his behaviour to me, that it had entirely eſtranged his affections. My mother preſſed me to return, but I begged leave to continue in the country, to which, after much importunity, ſhe aſſented.

I was determined to live the life of a recluſe, and ſhould never have quitted my ſolitude, had it not been for the tender affection I owed my mother. Sometimes I formed ſchemes to ſee

Adelaid,

Adelaid, which the fear of difobliging her as often prevented. After wavering thus for fome days, I reafoned myfelf into a belief of the innocence of feeing her, if without her knowledge or confent.—

I was fo riveted to this fcheme, that I determined to fend my fervant to Bourdeaux to enquire after the Marquis of Benavides family. This man had lived with me from my infancy, had waited on me at the Wells, and during my illnefs had been again permitted to attend me. After having given him all requifite inftructions, and repeated them to him again and

again, I ſuffered him to depart. On his arrival at Bourdeaux, he learned that the Marquis was not there, but had retired into the country with his lady ſoon after their marriage.—My ſervant, who had aſſumed the name of St. Laurent, wrote to me for further orders. I ordered him to Biſcay, the country ſeat of Benavides without loſs of time, for my impatience to ſee Adelaid was grown irreſiſtible. St. Laurent was near ſix weeks on his journey. On his return he told me, that after much trouble and variety of fruitleſs ſchemes, he at length gained admittance into the houſe in the character of an architect, that he fortunately

nately underſtood the buſineſs, having been originally educated to it, and that the Marquis of Benavides was in great want of ſuch a perſon.—"I believe, "added he, that madam de Benavides "recollected me; certain am I at leaſt, "that my firſt appearance called up a "bluſh on her countenance." He informed me, that ſhe lived the moſt retired and melancholy life; that her huſband was perpetually with her, was fond of her to exceſs, but that jealouſy was the only proof he had given her of his affections; which he carried to ſuch lengths, that his own brother was not permitted to ſee her, ſave only in his preſence.——

I found, on enquiry, that this brother was a young gentleman the very reverſe of the Marquis, and was as univerſally eſteemed as the other was deſpiſed; and that he appeared much attached to his ſiſter-in law. This information did not immediately make any impreſſion on me. The deplorable ſituation of madam de Benavides, and my anxiety to ſee her, engroſſed my whole attention. St. Laurent ſaid, he had taken proper meaſures for my introduction; that I muſt aſſume the character of a painter, as the Marquis had ordered him to bring an adept in that art. Nothing more was requiſite than to prepare for our

journey.—I wrote to my mother, and informed her, that I was going to ſpend a few weeks at a friend's houſe. I then immediately with St. Laurent took the road to Biſcay. There was no end to my enquiries about madam de Benavides, I wiſhed to hear the minuteſt trifles which concerned her. St. Laurent could give me but little ſatisfaction, as he had ſeldom ſeen her. He ſaid, ſhe paſſed whole days in her own apartment, with no other company but a little dog, which ſhe ſeemed extravagantly fond of. This circumſtance gave me peculiar pleaſure, as I had preſented the dog to her; and I flattered myſelf,

that ſhe careſſed him on that account. When a man is truely wretched, he dwells on every trifle which fleeted by unnoticed in the ſunſhine of proſperity. The heart, which needeth conſolation, catches at every ſhadow. St. Laurent ſpake much of young Benavides attachment to his ſiſter, that he often ſoothed his brother's paſſions, and that he contributed greatly to the relief of Adelaid's melancholy. He exhorted me not to attempt ſpeaking to her. I do not, ſaid he, mention the danger of a diſcovery, ſince your own danger would be too trifling a motive to reſtrain you; but conſider that you will expoſe her, who is dearer

dearer to you than life, to the fury of a jealous and implacable husband. I was persuaded, that the seeing of Adelaid would be so great a satisfaction, that I should not wish to speak to her; I therefore gave my word to St. Laurent, that my circumspection should outstrip his fears.

After many days journey, which appeared years to my impatience, we arrived in safety at Biscay, where I was introduced to the Marquis, and immediately employed. I was lodged with the pretended architect, whose business was to superintend the works. I continued my employ for many days

without ſeeing the object of my ſoul. At length I ſaw the dear lovely Adelaid paſs the window of the room in which I was painting. The evening was fine, and ſhe was walking in the garden with the little dog, but ſeemed indifferent to the pleaſing objects round. There was in her gait an air of languor, and melancholy was ſeated on her brow. My God! how can I deſcribe the anguiſh of my ſoul? I remained like a ſtatue at the window waiting her return; when it was ſo late, that I could not diſtinguiſh her as ſhe paſſed; but my heart told me it was Adelaid.——

The

The ſecond time I ſaw her was in the chapel. I had ſo placed myſelf, that I could remark every action unobſerved. I never once could catch her eye, for which I ought to have been thankful; as ſhe moſt aſſuredly would have obliged me to leave the houſe. Yet I was affected at having eſcaped her notice, and returned from the chapel more ſick at heart, more heavily oppreſſed, than when I entered it. I had as yet contrived no plan for diſcovering myſelf, but was afraid, that if occaſion offered, my integrity would yield to the temptation.

Young

Young Benavides likewiſe gave me much uneaſineſs. He was often with me, and notwithſtanding the apparent difference of our ſituations, treated me with a familiarity which required at leaſt my gratitude. But his agreeable behaviour and extraordinary merit, which I could not but obſerve, reſtrained my acknowledgments. I dreaded in him a rival, and perceived in the whole tenor of his behaviour, a ſpecies of melancholy too nearly reſembling mine, not to ſuſpect the cauſe from which it ſprang. But what wedded me to my ſuſpicions, was his ſaying that I was in love. The melancholy, ſaid he, with which I ſee

you

you oppreſſed ariſes from the heart. Can I ſerve you? Speak your wants, it will be to me a ſatisfaction to relieve them. The unfortunate in general meet with my compaſſion, but yours is a misfortune which I more particularly pity.——

I thanked the Chevalier for his obliging offers with an ill grace. I could not deny my love; but told him, that ſuch was my ſituation, that time alone muſt work the cure. If ſaid he you can expect that, I am no ſtranger to a perſon yet more miſerable than yourſelf.

When

When he was retired, I made a thouſand reflections on our preceding converſation. I concluded that he was in love, and that his ſiſter was the object of his affections. Every circumſtance, which I moſt minutely examined, confirmed me in my ſuſpicions. I ſaw that he was attached to Adelaid, and that he looked at her with my eyes. Yet I was not jealous. My eſteem for Adelaid baniſhed ſuch ungenerous ſentiments from my heart: but I could not ſuppreſs my fears, that the ſight of an amiable young man, ever ſtudious to oblige, might diminiſh her regard for me,

me, who was the innocent but unhappy author of all her woes.

My thoughts were in this train, when Adelaid attended by the Chevalier, entered the apartment I was painting. I cannot conceive, ſaid ſhe, why you preſs me thus to ſee the alterations which are making in this room? You know I have no taſte for painting.——I truſt madam, ſaid I, looking full upon her, that if you will condeſcend to obſerve this painting, you will not repent your complaiſance. Adelaid ſtruck with my voice immediately knew me.——She trembled, turned pale, and obſerving that the

ſmell

ſmell of the paint was diſagreeable, left the apartment without deigning me the leaſt regard.

I was motionleſs with aſtoniſhment, and overwhelmed with grief. "What "have I done? It is true indeed I "have diſobeyed her orders; but if "ſhe loved me, ſhe would pardon "a crime which tends only to ſhew "the exceſs of my paſſion."

I haſtily therefore concluded, that ſince Adelaid did not love me, ſhe muſt neceſſarily love another. This thought drove me even to madneſs. From that moment only did I date

my

my miſery. St. Laurent entered the room and found me in an agitation, which filled him with apprehenſion. "What is the matter, ſaid he, what "accident has happened?"

"I am undone, Adelaid loves me "not. I again repeated, Adelaid "loves me not. Is it poſſible? Alas! "from this cruel moment have I not "reaſon to complain. What miſery, "what torture would I not undergo "to recal the happineſs I have loſt? "That happineſs, which was all in "all to me; that happineſs, which "made me ſmile in miſery."—

St. Laurent

Sr. Laurent could not comprehend from my broken ſentences and wild tranſports of complaint, what was the occaſion of them. I was at length ſufficiently compoſed to give him information. I do not, ſaid he, apprehend, that you have juſt cauſe to drive you to deſpair. Madam de Benavides is undoubtedly offended at the ſtep you have taken, and intends by her indifference to puniſh you for it. Beſides ſhe might be afraid of diſcovering you, had ſhe ſeemed to regard you.—No, no, replied I, love has not that command over itſelf. Love is not thus circumſpectly prudent. The heart obeys its firſt impulſe.

pulſe. I muſt ſee her, I muſt reproach her with her inconſtancy. Alas! after what ſhe has done, ought ſhe in this cruel manner to rob me of my life? Why did ſhe not ſuffer me to remain in priſon? then I had been happy; for then I ſhould have thought myſelf beloved.

St. Laurent, afraid that any one ſhould ſee me in that deplorable condition, conducted me to my chamber. I ſpent the whole night in torments inexpreſſible. I had no ſooner formed an idea, than it gave way to ſome new phantom of my brain. One moment I condemned my ſuſpicions as un-

generous, and nourifhed them as realities the next. Now I acknowledged my injuftice in wifhing Adelaid to preferve a tendernefs, which muft be productive of mifery; then I reproached my felfifhnefs in loving her lefs for her fake than my own. " Since fhe loves me " no more, faid I to St. Laurent, " fince fhe has transferred her af- " fection, I will breath out my foul " at her feet; but before death fhall " clofe my eye, will bid her a laft " adieu; one tender, laft farewel: " fhe fhall hear no reproach from me. " My grief, which cannot be fup-

" preffed,

"preſſed, will more than ſufficiently "reproach her."

I fortified myſelf in this reſolution, and was determined to put it into execution. St. Laurent told me to take the opportunity, while the Chevalier was hunting, and when the Marquis was engaged with his ſteward: and made me promiſe, the better to lull ſuſpicion aſleep, to work as uſual, and to talk of my approaching departure.

I reſumed my bruſh, and flattered myſelf that Adelaid would pay me another viſit. Every footſtep awoke

my attention; every noiſe alarmed me. I had been in this ſtate of anxious expectation for ſome days, and had almoſt bidden adieu to hope; I therefore was determined to ſeize the firſt moment of her being alone. That moment at length arrived. I ſaw Adelaid enter her chamber alone; I knew that the Chevalier was engaged in hunting, and that the Marquis was in an under room with one of his tenants. I followed Adelaid with ſuch precipitation, that ſhe did not immediately obſerve me; ſhe would have fled the moment ſhe ſaw me, had I not detained her by catching hold of her robe; "Fly me not madam, ſaid I,

"let me for a moment enjoy your
"presence?—— That instant past,
"and I will trouble you no more.—
"I will leave you, for ever leave you;
"and expiate by my death the mi-
"series I have occasioned you. For
"I cannot, will not survive the loss
"of your affections. I hope the
"Chevalier will be more fortunate
"than - - - - - - - Adelaid, whom
"surprise and anxiety had hitherto
"kept silent, interrupted me at these
"words, and casting a scornful look
"at me, dare you, says she, re-
"proach me? Dare you suspect me?
"You - - - - - No, my lovely Ade-
"laid, replied I, throwing myself

" at her feet, I harbour no injurious
" ſuſpicions; pardon the words, to
" which my heart aſſented not."

I pardon you from my very ſoul, ſaid ſhe, but leave me immediately, and never ſee me more; conſider, that it is for you, and you alone, that I am the moſt miſerable of all human beings, wiſh you to make me the moſt criminal?——Your orders, replied I, ſhall be moſt religiouſly obſerved; but promiſe me at leaſt, that you hate me not.——

I ſtill continued kneeling, although Adelaid had entreated me to riſe.

Thoſe who love, can be no ſtrangers to the charms of that engaging attitude. I was yet in that poſture, when the door opened, and the Marquis, with his ſword drawn, ruſhed in upon us.———You die, wretch, ſays he to his wife, you ſhall this moment die. His threat would have been immediately executed, had I not thrown myſelf between them, drawing my ſword at the ſame inſtant. " I will begin " my vengeance then with you, ac- " companying his words with a thruſt, " which wounded me in the ſhoulder. " Life for its own ſake was not " worth defending; but I hated Be- " nevides too much to yield it up

" a ſacrifice to his fury. Beſides, his in-
" tent to murder his wife had made
" me deaf to the voice of reaſon;
" I returned the aſſault, and in a mo-
" ment left him motionleſs on the
" floor."

The domeſticks, alarmed by the cries of Madam de Benavides, entered the room the inſtant I was withdrawing my ſword from their maſter's body. They fell on me, and diſarmed me without the leaſt reſiſtance. The ſight of Madam de Benavides proſtrate on the floor, and weeping over her bleeding huſband deprived me of every

ſentiment

ſentiment but grief. I was draged from the chamber, and ſecured.

Then I ſaw (when left to my reflections) the abyſs into which I had plunged my Adelaid. Her huſband killed before her eyes, and killed by me, could not fail encouraging ſuſpicions injurious to her reputation. What had I not to reproach myſelf with? To me ſhe owed the birth of her misfortunes, which my imprudence had now completed.

"She ought to hate me; I juſtly "merit it. My ſole remaining hope "was, that I ſhould not be known.

"The

"The idea of being thought a villain,
"which on any other occaſion would
"have chilled my ſoul with horror,
"had now no fears for me. Adelaid,
"ſaid I, will do me juſtice, and Ade-
"laid is all the world to me."

This thought adminiſtered me ſome tranquillity; which, my impatience to anſwer their interrogatories interrupted. At midnight my door opened, and the Chevalier ſurpriſed me by his preſence. Fear not, ſays he, I wait on you by Madam de Benavides order. Such is her opinion of me, that ſhe has concealed nothing reſpecting you.—Probably, added he

with

with a ſigh, which would not be ſuppreſſed, had ſhe known me better, ſhe would not have been thus explicit; notwithſtanding that, I will not betray her confidence; if poſſible, I will ſave you both.——You ſhall not, ſaid I, ſave me, had I thouſand lives, I would ſacrifice them to Madam de Benanides juſtification.

I then explained my deſign of remaining unknown, and ſuffering as an aſſaſſin. Your ſcheme, repl.ed the Chevalier, might be feaſible, were my brother dead, which from your converſation, I perceive, you apprehend. But his wound, though dangerous, is

not

not mortal. And the first sign he gave of life, was his order to confine his wife in her own apartment. That may be sufficient to convince you of his suspicions, you will therefore throw away your life an useless sacrifice. Fly therefore immediately; I can do to night what will not be in my power to-morrow.——

What, said I, then will be the fate of Madam de Benavides? I cannot prevail on myself to withdraw from the danger which I have brought on her, and leave her to the mercy of her unrelenting husband. I have already, replied the Chevalier, told you that your

your preſence can only render her ſituation ſtill more dreadful. Since Madam de Benavides inſiſts on it, and her intereſt requires it, I will abſcond! But I hoped by the ſacrifice of my life, to gain her pity, though her pity I do not merit.—I am a wretch unworthy even to die for her. Protect her Chevalier, you are generous, you are humane; her innocence, her misfortunes, plead powerfully for her. You may judge, anſwered he, by what has inadvertently, or rather unavoidably eſcaped me, that Madam de Benavides intereſt is ſo dear to my repoſe, that I ſhall dedicate my life to her ſervice. Alas! I ſhould think

my

my ſervices amply recompenſed, if I could flatter myſelf that ſhe had never loved. But who, that has not ſuffered like you, can hope to touch a heart like hers.—But go, continued he, profit by the darkneſs. He took me by the hand, and led me through the courts of the caſtle.

I was ſo full of indignation at my own behaviour, that in a phrenzy of deſpair, I prayed, if it was poſſible to be yet more miſerable.

The Chevalier at my departure adviſed me to go into a convent of religious at ſome ſmall diſtance. There, ſaid

ſaid he, you muſt remain for ſome days to elude the ſearch I ſhall be neceſſitated to make. I have in this letter recommended you to the head of the order, in him you may moſt implicitly confide.

I loitered for ſome time about the invirons of the caſtle unable to prevail on myſelf to remove. But the hopes of hearing news of Adelaid determined me to proceed to the convent.

I arrived there at day break, and delivered my recommendation to the Abbot, who conducted me to a chamber.

ber. My extreme weakneſs, and my clothes ſtained with blood, made him ſuſpect that I was wounded. Before he could aſk me the queſtion I had ſwooned away. The ſurgeon of the convent was immediately ſent for to examine my wound, which was much inflamed by the ſharpneſs of the night, and irritated by the fatigue I had undergone. When I was alone with the father, to whom I had been recommended, I begged him to ſend to the village for St. Laurent, who, I did apprehend was concealed there. My ſuſpicion was well founded.—St. Laurent returned with the meſſenger. The poor fellow's affliction on hearing

that

that I was wounded, was exceſſive. When he approached my bed, I told him if he would ſave my life, he muſt enquire into Madam de Benavides ſituation, and acquaint himſelf with every particular; for that my ſufferings were more dreadful than death itſelf in all its horrors. He promiſed to execute my commands with fidelity and diſpatch, and left me to prepare his meaſures. A fever attacked me with great violence, my wound grew dangerous, and I twice ſubmitted my ſhoulder to the inciſions of the ſurgeon. But ſuch was the diſorder of my mind, that I regarded not the malady of my body.

Madam de Benavides was ever before my eyes, weeping and proſtrated on the floor by her wounded huſband, in the ſame diſmal attitude as when I left her chamber. I reviewed the miſfortunes of her life; I found myſelf the author of them all: Her marriage, her choice of a huſband in every reſpect odious, theſe were ſacrifices made for me; for me who had filled up the meaſure of her misfortunes by ruining her reputation. I reflected on my ill founded jealouſy, which though it vaniſhed at a word and died in its very birth, I could not pardon.—What a baſe ungenerous ſuſpicion! Adelaid ought to look on me,

as

as on a wretch unworthy her eſteem. I muſt be odious to her memory! This idea all dreadful as it was, the rage with which I was animated againſt myſelf enabled me to ſupport. In eight days St. Laurent returned with news ill adapted to calm the tranſports of my grief. He told me that the Marquis continued in a very dangerous ſituation; that his wife appeared inconſolable, and that his brother affected ſearching after me with vigour. As every incident was unpropitious, death ſhould have been my only wiſh; but I thought I ought to live for Madam de Benavides juſtification.

The Abbot, a witneſs to my ſighs and tears, took pity on me. He was a man of addreſs, well acquainted with the world, and had much philanthropy in his diſpoſition. But a variety of accidents had at length fixed him in a cloiſter. He ſucceſsfully endeavoured to gain my friendſhip by his ſenſibility, and by degrees he won my confidence. He became ſo neceſſary to my eaſe, that I could not conſent to his leaving me for a moment. I related to him my miſfortunes—I never ſaw a man with more goodneſs of heart.—I repeated the ſame ſtory a thouſand times; as often he ſeemed to hear me with

attention,

attention, to enter into all my ſorrows, and partake of all my cares. I was indebted to him for the knowledge of what paſſed at the Marquis's houſe. He told me that Benavides was declared to be out of danger, that Madam de Benavides lived more than uſually retired, and was thought to be in a declining way. He added, that it was neceſſary I ſhould prepare for my departure as ſoon as poſſible leaſt my retreat ſhould be diſcovered, which would bring freſh troubles on Madam de Benavides.

I was as yet unable to travel, for my fever had never left me, and my

wound was ſtill unhealed. I had been in the convent upwards of two months, when I obſerved Don Jerome to be more than uſually thoughtful.—His brow was clouded with care; he feared to catch my eye, and ſtudiouſly avoided all converſe with me. The unhappy are ever moſt compaſſionate! but for him I had a moſt ſincere eſteem, therefore was going to enquire the cauſe of his uneaſineſs, when St. Laurent entered my chamber, and told me that the Chevalier was in the convent and had enquired for me.—

He here! and you not mention him Don Jerome? I tremble for Madam

dam de Benavides.—For pity's ſake eaſe me of the cruel anxiety with which I am tortured even to madneſs. After ſome heſitation ſaid Don Jerome embracing me, I wiſh with all my ſoul that I could for ever eaſe you of your pain.——

" Alas, cried I, Adelaid is dead! " Benavides has ſacrificed her to his " revenge.——You anſwer not—I " have then no hope.—No—it is not " Benavides, it is I who plunged " the poniard into her heart.——Had " it not been for me, ſhe yet had lived. " My Adelaid is dead! has cloſed " her eyes for ever! No more ſhall I

" behold her! She is gone, for ever
" gone! She is dead! and yet I live!
" Why do I not follow her? Why
" do I not revenge her death? But
" no! to die will be a joy; ſince the
" grave will ſwallow up all my cares.
" I will live, and be my own avenger.

" My violent agitation burſt open
" my wound, which was not per-
" fectly cloſed; it bled again, and
" I fell into ſo deep a ſwoon, that
" they thought me dead, but after
" ſome hours I revived. Don Je-
" rome was apprehenſive I ſhould
" attempt my life, and charged St.
" Laurent not to leave me for a mo-
" ment,

"ment. My deſpair took another
"turn.—I obſerved a mournful ſi-
"lence, but never ſhed a tear. Then
"it was that I determined to bid a-
"dieu to ſociety, and deliver myſelf
"a prey to melancholy. The idea
"of tormenting myſelf was not wholly
"devoid of pleaſure. I therefore
"begged to ſee the Chevalier
"D'orſanne, as his preſence would
"renew my pain."

He came and ſeated himſelf by my bed. For ſome time we remained ſilent. He looked at me with eyes ſurcharged with tears. At length I ſpake.—You are too generous, Sir,

in

in pitying a wretch you ought to hate. But I beg you will not conceal one circumſtance of woe. I ſhall, anſwered he, only add to your miſery and my own; but as you inſiſt on it, will gratify your curioſity; when you will know, that you are not alone unhappy, ſince in my recital I ſhall be obliged to make mention of myſelf.—

" I had never ſeen Madam de Be-
" navides before her marriage; my
" brother, who was engaged in buſi-
" neſs of conſequence at Bourdeaux,
" became her lover; and although
" he had many rivals in every re-
" ſpect preferable to himſelf, yet by

I know

"I know not what fatality, on him
"ſhe fixed her choice. Soon after
"the nuptials, they came into the
"country; it was there I firſt ſaw her.
"I admired her perſon, but was en-
"amoured with the graces of her
"mind. Yet the regard I had for
"an amiable woman whom I ten-
"derly loved, ſteeled me againſt her
"charms. My brother would not
"conſent to our union, but I hoped
"to engage my ſiſter-in-law to be my
"advocate with her huſband. The
"father of my miſtreſs, nettled at the
"Marquis's refuſal, gave me but a
"very ſhort time to win his conſent,
"and declared both to me and his
"daughter,

" daughter, that at the expiration of
" that time he would marry her to
" another.

" The friendſhip with which Ma-
" dam de Benavides treated me,
" prompted me to beg her aſſiſtance.
" I went often to her apartment deter-
" mined to ſpeak to her, and as often
" I ſuffered the moſt trivial circum-
" ſtance to prevent me. Mean while
" the time preſcribed expired. I had
" before received many letters from
" my miſtreſs, preſſing me to be ex-
" peditious; my anſwers, unperceived
" by me, were fraught with cold-
" neſs, which ſubjected me to her
" reproaches.

"reproaches. I could not but think
"them unjuſt, and told her my opi-
"nion.—She believed herſelf for-
"ſaken; and indignation operating
"with her father's entreaties, pre-
"vailed on her to marry. She her-
"ſelf acquainted me with it. Her
"letter, though teeming with re-
"proach, was tender; and ſhe con-
"cluded with requeſting me never
"to ſee her more. I had moſt ſin-
"cerely loved her, and believe our
"love was mutual; I could not there-
"fore bear my loſs without unfeigned
"ſorrow. I feared ſhe was unhappy,
"and upbraided myſelf with being
"the author of her miſery.

"Theſe

" Theſe different thoughts were
" playing on my imagination as I
" was walking in the grove near the
" caſtle, when I accidentally met
" Madam de Benavides. She obſerved
" my uneaſineſs, and kindly enquired
" the reaſon. A ſecret reluctance re-
" ſtrained my anſwer. I could not
" prevail on myſelf to tell her I was
" in love; but the pleaſure to talk
" to her of love, though for another
" object, tempted me much. I dared
" not examine my own ſentiments in
" reſpect to my ſiſter-in-law. At
" length, after much heſitation, I men-
" tioned the cauſe of my uneaſineſs,

" and

" and ſhewed her the letter of Ma-
" demoiſelle de Valiere."

" Why have you thus been ſilent
" ſaid ſhe? had you mentioned it to
" me, I might perhaps have gained
" your brother's conſent, though he
" gave you the denial. How much
" I pity you! how ſincerely concern-
" ed am I for her! She will be moſt
" unhappy!" " Madam de Benavides
" compaſſion for the lady induced
" me to think that ſhe had not a
" diſadvantageous opinion of me.
" To leſſen her concern, I told her
" that Mademoiſelle's huſband was a
" man of merit, of conſiderable rank,

" and

" and had a prospect of a princely
" fortune." " You deceive yourself,
" says she, if you suppose those things
" can make her happy. Nothing can
" compensate for the loss of him we
" love. It is a dreadful thing to sub-
" stitute duty in the place of affec-
" tion." " Frequent sighs escaped her
" during this conversation; and her
" eyes were dim with tears.

" She said no more, but left me.
" I could not follow her; grief had
" deprived me both of speech and
" motion. I could not but see what
" I had hitherto shut my eyes against,
" that I was in love with my sister.—
" I like-

" I likewiſe ſuſpected that her heart
" was engaged to another. I re-
" collected a thouſand circumſtances
" which before I had not attended to.
" Her taſte for ſolitude, her indiffe-
" rence to amuſements, her exceſſive
" melancholy, which I had attributed
" to my brother's uſage, ſeemed now
" to ſpring from another cauſe. Re-
" flections the moſt gloomy preſented
" themſelves to my view. Every
" duty ſocial and divine forbade my
" love." " Were not her affections
" engaged to another, ſaid I, my love
" though hopeleſs, yet would have
" its ſweets. Her friendſhip without
" a bluſh of guilt I might demand.

" But what avails her friendſhip,
" while her heart is warmed with the
" more lively ſentiments of love?"
" I was conſcious that I ought to
" wean myſelf of a paſſion ſo fatal
" to my repoſe and repugnant to
" my honour; and determined to fly
" thoſe dangers, which I dared not
" meet. I returned to the caſtle to
" apprize my brother of my depar-
" ture; but the ſight of Madam de
" Benavides obliterated my reſolu-
" tions. Yet to have ſome pretext
" to ſtay, I cheated myſelf into the
" perſuaſion, that my preſence pre-
" vented in ſome meaſure my bro-
" ther's ill uſage.

" It

"It was about that time you ar-
"rived at the castle. Your air and
"manner contradicted your profession.
"I therefore made you a tender of
"my friendship, and wished to ob-
"tain your confidence, as I intended
"to engage you to draw Madam de
"Benavides picture. For in defiance
"of all the illusions of love I retained
"my purpose of leaving the house;
"and as I intended never to return,
"I was extremely solicitous to carry
"with me her picture. The manner
"in which you refused my advances,
"told me I could have no dependance
"on you; I therefore applied to
"another painter the very day you

" had that unhappy rencounter with
" my brother. Judge of my ſur-
" priſe, when on my return I learned
" what had paſſed. My brother pre-
" ſerved a gloomy ſilence, but darted
" looks of fury at his wife, who was
" weeping by him. As ſoon as I had
" entered the room, " deliver me, ſaid
" he, from the ſight of this crocodile
" who has betrayed me, conduct
" her to her apartment, and let her
" be confined." I would have ſpoken,
but he inſtantly ſtopped me by ſay-
ing, " Obey me this moment, or
" ſee my face no more."——" I was
" obliged to obey. I approached my
" ſiſter-in-law, and begged leave to
" ſpeak

" ſpeak with her in her own apart-
" ment. " Well, ſaid ſhe, ſhedding a
" flood of tears, execute your or-
" ders."——

" Theſe words, which carried with
" them the air of reproach, cut me to
" the heart. Before my brother I
" dared not reply; but as ſoon as I
" had waited on Madam de Benavides
" to her apartment, madam, ſaid I,
" with a look expreſſive of the moſt
" melancholy tenderneſs, do you con-
" found me with your perſecutor?
" I enter into all your cares,
" and will freely lay down my life
" to ſerve you. I ſhudder at the

" thought, it may be ill grounded,
" but I tremble for your life.—For
" heaven's ſake fly the danger which
" awaits you, and ſuffer me to con-
" duct you to a place of ſafety."

" I know not that the Marquis will
" ſacrifice me to his vengeance; but
" I know that it is my duty to con-
" tinue with him, and my duty I will
" fulfil, though the conſequence be
" fatal. She was ſilent for a moment,
" then renewing her diſcourſe, I am
" going, continued ſhe, by my confi-
" dence, to give you the ſtrongeſt
" aſſurance of my eſteem. But I
" muſt, at the ſame time that I pay you

" that

"that compliment, attend alſo to your
"welfare. Return therefore to your
"brother immediately, a long con-
"verſation may beget ſuſpicion, but
"ſee me again as ſoon as poſſible."—

"My immediate departure was an
"inſtance of my obedience. The ſur-
"geon had given orders, that the Mar-
"quis ſhould be left alone; I there-
"fore inſtantly returned to his lady,
"perplexed with a thouſand doubts
"and inquietudes. I wiſhed to know,
"what at the ſame time I was afraid
"to hear.—Madam de Benavides men-
"tioned her knowledge of you, and
"confeſſed the affection which was ſo

" deeply rooted in your heart; neither
" did ſhe diſſemble her own inclinati-
" ons."—Have I then (cried I, inter-
rupting the Chevalier) have I won
the affections of the moſt lovely of her
ſex?—and have I loſt her?——

This idea penetrated my heart with
ſuch tender ſentiments, that I melted
into tears.—" Yes, continued he, you
" were loved indeed.—Her every word
" ſpake tenderneſs, her every look af-
" fection. Her heart was wholly yours.
" I perceived, that ſhe dwelled with
" pleaſure on every circumſtance of
" your behaviour. She acknowledged
" that ſhe knew you the moment ſhe
" entered

" entered the room you was painting,
" that ſhe had written to you, entreat-
" ing you to leave the houſe, but never
" had an opportunity to give it you.
" She then minutely informed me of
" the Marquis's ſurpriſing you at the
" very inſtant you was bidding her an
" eternal adieu; and that he would
" have ſacrificed her to his fury, had
" it not been for your interpoſition.
" Save him, added ſhe, ſave my unfor-
" tunate lover from his impending fate.
" Too well I know, that he will ſuffer
" the moſt agonizing tortures without
" confeſſion; the rack will not extort
" from him a diſcovery which might
" expoſe me to ruin.

" Your

"Your good opinion, Madam, ſaid "I, is a full recompence for all his "ſufferings." "To you (replied Madam "de Benavides) I have diſcovered with-"out diſguiſe my weakneſs. But re-"member, although I have not been "miſtreſs of my inclinations, yet I have "of my conduct; and that I have not "even been guilty of an indiſcretion "the moſt rigid duty could condemn."

"Alas madam, to me your juſtifica-"tion is ſurperfluous! that our hearts "are not at our own diſpoſal, is a me-"lancholy truth, of which I am a moſt "unfortunate example.—Be aſſured "that I will ſerve you to the utmoſt,

"and

"and will, if possible, set the Count
"of Comminge at liberty, who (par-
"don me madam) is not perhaps the
"most unhappy.——

"In pronouncing these words I with-
"drew, not daring to lift my eyes
"from the ground. I fled to my
"own apartment, and considered the
"part I was to act. I determined at
"all events to deliver you; but I was
"debating, whether I ought not like-
"wise to fly myself: for my sufferings,
"during the recital of her misfortunes,
"convinced me of the excess of my
"passion, and I knew the necessity of
"weaning myself of an attachment so
"repugnant

" repugnant to every principle of vir-
" tue. But the cruelty of leaving Ma-
" dam de Benavides to the fury of her
" huſband, determined me after much
" wavering, to contribute by my ſtay
" to her aſſiſtance, but moſt ſtudiouſly
" to avoid her preſence.

" I was many days without ſeeing
" her, but my brother's being in im-
" minent danger obliged me to wait
" on Madam de Benavides.

" If, ſaid ſhe, I had loſt the Marquis
" by the common courſe of nature, I
" ſhould not have been ſo ſenſibly affec-
" ted. But the unhappy part I have
been

" been innocently engaged in, makes
" me insupportably wretched. I regard
" not his ill treatment, but I tremble
" at the idea of his dying with a bad
" opinion of my conduct. Should he
" survive, I trust, my innocence will
" prevail over appearance, and that I
" again shall enjoy, as I have merited,
" his esteem.—I must likewise, madam,
" replied I, endeavour to obtain yours.
" I implore forgiveness for the disco-
" very of my sentiments—sentiments
" I could neither prevent nor conceal.
" I know not that I can conquer this
" unhappy passion, but I most solemn-
" ly declare that I will never affront you
" more by revealing it. Had not your
" interest

"interest detained me, I before had "banished myself your presence. I "confess, replied Madam de Benavi- "des, that you have added much to "the measure of my misery. Fate has "deprived me of the consolation "which I found in your friendship.

"Her tears were more persuasive "than all the powers of reason. I was "ashamed to aggravate the miseries of "one so wretched.—No, madam, you "shall not lose that friendship you was "so gracious as to value. My struggles "to obliterate all traces of my error "shall render me not wholly undeserv- "ing your esteem.

"I found

"I found myſelf on taking leave
"more tranquil, and perceived a com-
"poſure in my mind, to which I had
"been before a ſtranger. So far from
"avoiding her preſence, I took every
"opportunity of being with her, that
"I might have new reaſons for con-
"firming myſelf in my duty. Succeſs
"ſmiled on my endeavours; and by
"degrees my paſſion glided into the
"more tranquil path of friendſhip. I
"acquainted Madam de Benavides with
"the progreſs of my reformation; ſhe
"confeſſed her acknowledgments, as
"for a ſervice I had done her, and by
"way of recompence gave me more diſ-
"tinguiſhed marks of her confidence.

"My

" My heart would ſometimes revolt,
" but reaſon kept its ſtate.——

" My brother at length recovered;
" he had not, during his illneſs, ſuffer-
" ed his wife to ſee him; and before he
" left his chamber, Madam de Bena-
" vides was ſeized with a fever. She
" was indebted to youth for her reco-
" very; and I had reaſon to conclude
" that her illneſs would have effected a
" reconciliation.——

" Although the Marquis in the
" height of his illneſs had peremptorily
" refuſed her ſolicitations to ſee him;
" yet he now enquired after her, with
" an earneſtneſs bordering on affection.

" She

"She was in a fair way of recovery, when the Marquis ordered me to attend him. I have ſome buſineſs of conſequence, ſaid he, which requires my preſence at Angers; my health will not ſuffer me to make the journey; you will oblige me in tranſacting the buſineſs; I have ordered my ſervants and equipage to attend you, and beg you will uſe all poſſible expedition. I was ſo much younger than my brother, that I reſpected him as a parent; and as I had no reaſon to excuſe myſelf from the journey, I prepared for my immediate departure. But I thought this inſtance of my complaiſance entitled me to recommend

Madam de Benavides to the return of his favour. What did I not urge to mitigate his wrath! I flattered myſelf I had moved his pity, and that his heart relented."

"I did love Madam de Benavides, ſaid my brother, with the pureſt affection, ſhe yet has ſtrong hold upon my heart; time and her future conduct may perhaps efface from my memory, what my eyes were ſuch melancholy witneſſes of." "I did not pretend to diſpute with him the juſtneſs of his anger. I thought it of ſome conſequence to have allayed his fury. I begged permiſſion to acquaint my

ſiſter

ſiſter with the hopes he had given me, to which he readily aſſented. Poor woman! ſhe heard the news with joy. I know, ſaid ſhe, that I never can be happy with the Marquis, but it will be great conſolation to conform to the dictates of my duty.——

"I took my leave, having again aſſured her of my brother's favourable ſentiments. One of the domeſticks, in whom I could confide, received my injunctions to be moſt minutely attentive to every thing which regarded his miſtreſs, and to acquaint me with it. After theſe precautions, which I deemed ſufficient, I took the

road to Angers. I had been there fifteen days without hearing from the caſtle. At length I received a letter from the domeſtick, who told me that my brother had diſmiſſed all his ſervants, except one man, whom he ſtill retained in his ſervice. This letter filled my ſoul with apprehenſion; without finiſhing my buſineſs, I took poſt immediately.

"I was on my journey from thence when I received the fatal news of Madam de Benavides's death; my brother, who had written at the ſame time, appeared ſo affected at her loſs, that I could not believe him guilty of contri-

contributing to ſo melancholy an event. He ſaid, that his affection had weaned him ſo much from his reſentment, that nothing but her ſudden death prevented his abſolute forgiveneſs. I have learnt ſince my arrival here, that ſhe relapſed ſoon after my departure, and expired in three days. My brother remains plunged in the deepeſt melancholy, denies himſelf to every one, and begs that I will not as yet wait upon him. I obey his commands with pleaſure; ſince every object there would recal Madam de Benavides to my memory, and more ſenſibly aggravate my ſorrows,

"I fear her death has revived my ſhameful paſſion; as I know not whether love does not contribute more than friendſhip to my tears. I am ſo tortured with my own melancholy reflections, that I am determined to go immediately into Hungary, where I hope, amidſt the perils of war, I ſhall either recover my long-loſt tranquillity, or find in an honourable death a period to my woes."——

I would have thanked him for his melancholy narrative, but my voice was choaked with ſighs, my eyes were dim with tears. He ſeemed not leſs affected; and withdrew with

Don

Don Jerome to leave me to my reflections.

The relation I had juſt heard ſpurred on my impatience to bid adieu to ſociety, and to ſecrete myſelf where melancholy reigned alone. My earneſtneſs to reduce my reſolutions into practice contributed greatly to my recovery. My ſtrength returned, my wound cloſed, and I was after ſome weeks languiſhing able to endure the fatigues of a journey. My laſt interview with Don Jerome was very affecting. His words, his looks, his wiſhes, breathed the honeſt air of friendſhip and affection. But I was

ſo abſorbed in the idea of Adelaid, that my heart made but an ungrateful return. I concealed my deſign, leaſt the officiouſneſs of my friends ſhould prevent my putting it in execution. I wrote to my mother by St. Laurent, whom I recommended to her protection; I gave her a minute detail of every circumſtance of my misfortunes; I mentioned my reſolution of ſequeſtering myſelf from the world, and told her, that I thought it my duty to remove from her eye, a wretch whoſe only wiſh was death, and that if ſhe was deſirous of obliging me, ſhe would not attempt diſcovering my retreat. I gave St. Laurent at his

departure my all, having reſerved a mere ſufficiency for my journey. Madam de Benavides's letter and picture, which I always carried at my heart, were the only riches I valued and retained.——

I left the convent, and came without any interruption to the Abbey of la Trappe. Immediately on my arrival I requeſted the habit, which the principal of the order refuſed, alledging that I muſt firſt go through my novitiate. I completed my trial without a murmur, and when I was aſked whether the meanneſs of my diet and the auſterities preſcribed were not unequal

equal to my reſolution; ſuch had been the power of my grief, that I anſwered, that I was a ſtranger both to the coarſeneſs of diet, and the auſterities which they mentioned.——

My inſenſibility was conſtrued into zeal, and I was immediately admitted. The aſſurance that my tears could not now be interrupted, and that my whole life wou'd be ſpent in the exerciſe of affliction adminiſtered me ſome conſolation. The ſolitude, the ſilence of this ſeat of miſery, together with the melancholy which was ſtampt on every face, contributed not a little to the nouriſhing of my grief. I

went

went through the duties of the convent without repining, for to me every thing was equally indifferent. I every day ſecreted myſelf in the boſom of the woods, where I red my Adelaid's letter, and dwelt on every word: there I examined her picture, till imagination gave it life; I bathed both the one and the other with my tears, and returned to the convent more ineffably miſerable.

In this manner had I lingered on for three long years, a life of miſery without the leaſt alloy, when the bell ſummoned me to aſſiſt at the laſt moments of a brother. He

was

was lying on a plank ſtrewed with aſhes and receiving the extreme unction, when he begged permiſſion to break ſilence.——

" What I ſhall ſay my father (ad-
" dreſſing himſelf to the principal of
" our ſociety) will animate my au-
" ditors with new fervour towards
" the Almighty; who by ways the
" moſt extraordinary, has ſnatched
" me from a gulph of miſery to ſteer
" me into the harbour of eternal ſal-
" vation."——

He thus proceeded,——

" I diſ-

" I disgrace the name of brother,
" with which these holy men have
" honoured me. In me, behold—
" a wretched, sinful woman. Whom
" love, unholy love, conducted hi-
" ther.——I loved and was beloved
" by a man of equal rank. But
" the animosity of our parents
" was a fatal obstacle to our union,
" and I was obliged for the welfare of
" my lover to give my hand a rebel
" to my heart. Even in the choice
" of a husband, I sought only to give
" a proof of the extravagance of my
" passion: and he who could inspire
" hate alone, was to obviate my
" lover's jealousy, to all unworthily
" pre-

" preferred. But it was the will of
" the Almighty, that a marriage thus
" contracted with views ſo criminal,
" ſhould be to me an uninterrupted
" ſource of miſery. Behold! my
" huſband and my lover, by each
" other wounded, bleeding before
" my eyes! A ſcene ſo ſhocking threw
" me into a fever; from which I was
" ſcarce recovered, when my huſband
" immured me in a dungeon, and
" made report declare me dead. In
" this place of horror I lingered out
" two years, to every conſolation alike
" a ſtranger. My huſband, unſated
" with my ſufferings, had the cruelty
" to add inſult to miſery. What do

" I ſay?

" I ſay?——My God! dare I brand
" with cruelty the inſtrument you
" thought meet to be my puniſhment!
" My miſeries, heavy as they were,
" opened not my eyes to my errors;
" when I ſhould have wept my ſins,
" I could only lament my lover.——
" The death of my huſband at length
" procured my liberty.——The do-
" meſtick who alone was conſcious of
" my fate, opened my priſon; but at
" the ſame time informed me, that
" I had been reputed dead from the
" firſt moment of my confinement.

" The noiſe my adventure would
" occaſion, determined me on retire-
" ment;

" ment; a resolution I the more
" readily embraced, as all my in-
" quiries were fruitless after the only
" person for whom I wished to live.
" That I might the more easily steal
" unnoticed from the castle, I dis-
" guised myself in the habit of a
" man, in which I purposed travelling
" to a convent in the neighbourhood
" of Paris. I was hastening thither,
" when a secret impulse, as I passed
" this seat of religion, obliged me
" to enter your chapel. On the instant
" of my entrance I distinguished in
" the fulness of the anthem, a voice
" too well accustomed to sink into
" my heart. I believed myself se-
" duced

"duced by the powers of imagina-
"tion.—I drew near, and through all
"the changes which time and auste-
"rities had made on his countenance,
"I recognized the man so dear to
"my memory. My God! how vio-
"lent were my agitations! how im-
"pious were my thoughts! I dared
"blaspheme the author of my being
"for seducing my lover from me.
"You punished not my impious
"murmurs, O my God! but made
"my miseries promote my eternal
"welfare. I could not force myself
"from the place, which held my
"very soul. And that I no more
"might lose him, I offered myself to

" you my father for the habit. With
" ſuch earneſtneſs I prayed admit-
" tance, that you admitted me. How
" did I perform your holy exerciſe!
" A heart throbbing with guilty paſ-
" ſion, my ſoul wrapped up in him I
" loved.

" The Almighty by abandoning me
" to myſelf, was willing to give me
" more powerful reaſons for my fu-
" ture humiliation. He therefore
" ſuffered me to taſte the empoiſoned
" joys of breathing the ſame air, and
" of being under the ſame roof with
" him, who innocently had ſeduced
" my ſoul from his holy preſence.

" I

" I haunted my lover as his ſhadow;
" I aſſiſted his labours with all my
" little ſtrength, and in thoſe mo-
" ments was amply paid my every
" trouble. My infatuation would
" have led me to diſcover myſelf,
" had I not been reſtrained by the
" dread of interrupting the tran-
" quillity of him, who had robbed
" me of my repoſe. Yes—thou be-
" nevolent author of my being, I
" ſhould have endeavoured to ſeduce
" that ſoul which I believed wholly
" thine!—

" At the expiration of two months
" each man was obliged to dig his

" grave, agreeable to the founder's
" inſtitution, who by a perpetual
" idea of death intended to render
" holy the lives of his order.

" I attended as uſual on him to
" whom I was bound by chains ſo
" ſhameful. The ſight of his grave,
" and the zeal with which he dug it,
" penetrated my heart with ſuch a
" lively ſorrow, that to conceal my
" weakneſs I was obliged to retire.
" It ſeemed the very moment in
" which I ſhould for ever loſe him.
" This idea preyed on my imagina-
" tion, and if I left him but a few
" hours,

" hours, I feared I ſhould never ſee
" him more.

" Behold the happy moment
" which God had prepared to win me
" to himſelf!——We were cutting
" wood in the foreſt for the ſupply
" of the convent.—My lover had
" unperceived eſcaped from me. My
" ſolicitude prompted me to ſearch
" for him through all the mazes of
" the wood; at laſt I eſpied him in
" a part the moſt retired, poring
" over ſome thing which hung at his
" boſom. His attention was ſo ab-
" ſorbed, that I drew near unnoticed,
" and ſurveyed the object of his con-

" temptation. How inexpreſſible was
" my amazement at ſeeing my own
" picture. Then I perceived, that
" ſo far from enjoying the repoſe I
" dreaded to diſturb, that he was like
" myſelf, an unhappy victim to a
" more unhappy paſſion.—Then did
" my imagination paint the Almighty
" in his anger ready to lay his heavy
" hand upon him. I trembled leaſt
" the love which I had impiouſly
" carried with me to his holy altar,
" ſhould draw down the vengeance
" of heaven on the unhappy object
" of it. Full of this idea, I proſtrated
" myſelf before his holy ſhrine. I
" prayed for my converſion, that I
" might

"might obtain it for my lover.—Yes
"my God, it was for him alone I
"offered you my prayers. It was
"for him alone my tears were ſhed.
"It was my anxiety for his happineſs,
"which made me a proſelyte to
"righteouſneſs.—You looked down
"with an eye of mercy on my weak-
"neſs. My prayers all inſufficient,
"all impious as they were, were
"not rejected. An emanation of
"your holy grace deſcended into my
"heart. Then did I taſte that peace
"of mind, which ſouls dedicated to
"thy ſervice can alone enjoy.——

"You

" You willed by my ſufferings to
" add yet more to my purification.—
" But hold.——I feel the hand of
" death upon me.——If the com-
" panion of my infatuation ſtill la-
" bours under the oppreſſion of ini-
" quity, let him reflect on the ob-
" ject of his fooliſh paſſion, let him
" caſt his eye on me; let him think
" on that tremendous moment which
" now awaits me, and which he ſoon
" muſt know. The period of my
" exiſtence is arrived; I implore the
" prayers of theſe holy men; I requeſt
" their pardon for the offence I have
" given, and I acknowledge myſelf
" unworthy

"unworthy to partake of their ſe-
"pulture."———

Language cannot paint the feelings of my ſoul; I experienced in that tremendous moment all the tenderneſs of love and agonizing horrors of deſpair. I was kneeling with the other religious, when firſt ſhe ſpake; the voice I inſtantly knew to be the voice of Adelaid; but the fear of loſing a ſingle word ſhe uttered, reſtrained my cries. When I found ſhe was expired, I grew delirious with grief; I ſprung from the religious who had crowded to my aſſiſtance; I threw myſelf on my knees, I ſeized

her

her lifeleſs hand and bathed it with a torrent of tears.—"Now I have for "ever loſt you; my dearest Adelaid "was with me, and my heart un-"grateful knew her not.——No—"we will part no more.——Death "leſs cruel than my father, ſhall "unite us now for ever."——

My holy brethren melted at this ſpectacle of woe, endeavoured by the moſt pathetic and chriſtian exhortations to remove me from the body, which I held in my embrace. Force ſucceeded to entreaties, and I was confined in my cell.

The

The father Abbot attended me the whole night, and endeavoured to mitigate my ſorrows, but he could not win on my affliction.

" Reſtore me Adelaid, ſaid I, why
" have you ſeparated us? No—I can-
" not, will not live where ſhe ſo much
" has ſuffered. For pity's ſake per-
" mit me to quit this place! What
" would you with a wretch like me,
" My deſpair will poiſon that tran-
" quillity, which has ever flouriſhed
" here. Suffer me to retire to ſome
" ſequeſtered vale far from the haunts
" of men. My Adelaid will inter-
" cede with the Almighty for a re-
" miſſion

" miſſion of my ſins.——And you,
" my father, be propitious to this
" my laſt requeſt. Promiſe me, that
" the ſame tomb ſhall unite our aſhes,
" there we may ſleep in peace.——I
" in return moſt ſolemnly proteſt,
" that I will not expedite that hour,
" which can alone remove my
" cares."——

The father Abbot ſoftened into pity, and willing probably to remove from the eye of his convent an object ſo diſgraceful, yielded to my preſſing importunities.

I in-

I inſtantly bade adieu to the Abbey of la Trappe, and came to this hermitage, where I have ſpent many years in no other employ, than in bewailing with tears my loſs.——

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